

Is There a “Why” at All?

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Henry: Hello, Ted. On page 235 of *How to Attain Enlightenment* James says, “A substrate makes the error that I am limited possible.” So I (as the substrate, awareness) make that error, through the power of *maya*.

Ted: Yes, my power of *maya*.

Henry: *Maya* superimposes ignorance upon pure awareness (me), but *maya* is me.

Ted: Yes. *Maya* is a power inherent in your own being that has both a “material” aspect as the substance out of which all the holographic objects it projects within the scope of awareness, or causes pure awareness to appear as, are constituted and a “subtle” aspect as the macrocosmic intelligence (i.e. *Isvara*) that informs and organizes those objects. Its effect on the *jiva* (i.e. apparent individual person) is *avidya* (i.e. self-ignorance), which causes to the *jiva* to take itself to be the body-mind-sense complex with which it is associated and to take the seemingly surrounding world within which the body-mind-sense complex is situated to be real and all its constituent objects to be independently existent entities. Hence non-dual reality appears as the dualistic apparent reality.

Henry: My question is, why do I do any of this? Is there a “why” at all?

Ted: Well, first of all, let’s be clear that you, limitless awareness, do not do anything at all. Limitless awareness is by definition actionless due to the fact that it is all-pervasive, perfectly full, partless and impersonal. Due to its all-pervasiveness, it has no arena within which to act or move, and thus no background or opposing force against which to measure any movement or change, which is the hallmark of action, and hence an essential requirement for doership. Due to its perfect fullness, limitless awareness has nothing to gain by executing an action, and so even if it were a personal entity – which it is not – it would have no desire to obtain anything through its actions, which is the only reason that a doer does anything. On the flip side of this coin, limitless awareness cannot lose anything either, for there is nothing other than itself and therefore nowhere else anything could go, no place where it would be separate from awareness. Another ramification of its limitless nature is that awareness is partless and therefore has neither any instrument with which to act nor can there be any other entity or object upon which it can act. Also, awareness is completely impersonal. It has no mind – the functions that constitute what we call the mind, after all, are nothing other than objects – and does not orchestrate events according to a personal agenda (even *Isvara* does not do this).

Having said that, it is pretty obvious that there is no reason why awareness appears as the apparent reality.

“Why” implies a purpose, a goal or an end that is to be accomplished. Setting aside the fact that accomplishment lies solely within the domain of doership, there can be no greater purpose toward which limitless awareness is heading.

Limitless conscious existence (i.e. *sat-chit-ananda*) is the fundamental reality. These three words do not function as adjectives or describe characteristics that set one awareness apart from another. Rather they are *lakshanas* (i.e. pointers) that indicate three irreducible aspects of one fundamental reality.

Existence is irreducible because the only alternative is non-existence, and even if non-existence were granted legitimate status, that status would necessarily be existent.

Consciousness is irreducible because what is existent can only be recognized due to its appearance within consciousness – which is not to say within the scope of a particular mind or even the collective mind, but rather within the scope of awareness-as-such, which is indicated by the fact that all existent entities have *priyam* (i.e. knowability). Moreover, since something cannot come from nothing – a fact that even material science acknowledges – consciousness cannot have come from something that was not conscious, and therefore existence itself must be inherently conscious.

Limitlessness is irreducible because conscious existence must be limitless given the fact that all known – or potentially knowable – objects are necessarily existent, and thus must obtain within and be pervaded by conscious existence. Since conscious existence contains all that is, it must itself have no defining boundaries or edges that could be compromised or expanded or any characteristics or qualities that could be diminished or enhanced. The only way around this logical conclusion is to attribute the existence of consciousness to a greater source. This tack is illegitimate, however, because it devolves into the logical absurdity of regressus ad infinitum and fails to acknowledge the fact that in any case the ultimate source would necessarily have to be unlimited, conscious and existent.

Since awareness is already the intrinsically whole and complete fundamental reality that is by nature actionless and immutable, it can have no purpose for appearing as the ever-changing phenomenal cosmic drama of the apparent reality. Moreover, due to the impersonal nature of awareness, even the argument that it does its cosmic dance for the purpose of its own entertainment does not hold water.

Difficult as it may be to accept, there is no reason why awareness seems to do what it seems to do. Due to the two beginningless aspects of being – i.e. *brahman* and *maya*, awareness and ignorance – it simply is the way it is.

Henry: And finally, I was gathering from reading Dennis Waite that there is no free will, that regardless of what the individual *jiva* does or does not do, it has no say-so in even the actions taken or not taken moment-to-moment. Is there a “final punchline,” like it was all a funny tragic comedy completely devoid of any effort from the limited *jiva*-you and the *Isvara*-you and the limitless-you, awareness?

Ted: To answer this question, I have attached a second document titled *The Cycle of Life and the Illusion of Free Will*, which is also available in the Publications section of my website. The

article makes a thorough investigation of this topic from the three ontological levels of reality: *paramarthika satya* (i.e. *brahman's* point of view), *vyavaharika satya* (*Isvara's* point of view) and *pratibhasika satya* (i.e. *jiva's* point of view).

Henry: I hope India goes well. Will you be filming to see at YouTube or posting anything?

Ted: Thank you. The plan is to videograph the sessions of the seminar and then to post various segments at YouTube and make whole seminar available on a stick for purchase.

Henry: Oh, are you writing a book, specifically on the *gunas*?

Ted: No, Sundari is writing a book on the *gunas*. I am writing a book that provides an overview of Vedantic self-inquiry similar to James' books, but presented in my own voice. I'm hoping to have it published by this coming summer.

Henry: Once again, *namaste*.

Ted: All the best.